

# GDA Reporting Subcommittee Update

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National Geospatial Advisory Committee Meeting  
May 19, 2022



# GDA Reporting Subcommittee

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## **Membership:**

- Mark Meade (Chair), Chad Baker, Tony LaVoi, Felicia Retiz, Cy Smith, Tim Trainor

## **Subcommittee Role:**

- Work with FGDC OS staff & NGAC leadership to plan and coordinate NGAC's submission of comments as part of the GDA reporting process
- Identify areas of focus for NGAC review and assess the utility of the reports
- Collect/synthesize NGAC's comments on the GDA reports
- Document and communicate lessons learned and recommendations for improving the process for future reports.

# FY 2021 GDA Annual Reports – Status

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- FGDC agencies used common criteria, reporting templates, and processes – including agency self-assessments of performance – to complete the 2021 GDA annual reports
- All 2021 annual reports completed and posted on FGDC website, along with covered agency and NGDA dashboards
- FGDC submitted Summary of FY 2021 GDA Annual Reports to NGAC for review and comment on March 1, 2022
- NGAC GDA Reporting Subcommittee requested comments from NGAC members, met with FGDC team, and compiled consolidated set of NGAC comments

# FGDC Responses to 2020 NGAC Comments – Summary

- NGAC comments were included in the FY 2020 GDA Report to Congress
- FGDC discussed NGAC comments with GDA working group and NGDA Theme leads
- FGDC team has reviewed NGAC comments on multiple occasions as FY 2021 GDA reports were developed
- FGDC team documented responses to NGAC comments in spreadsheet distributed to NGAC GDA subcommittee

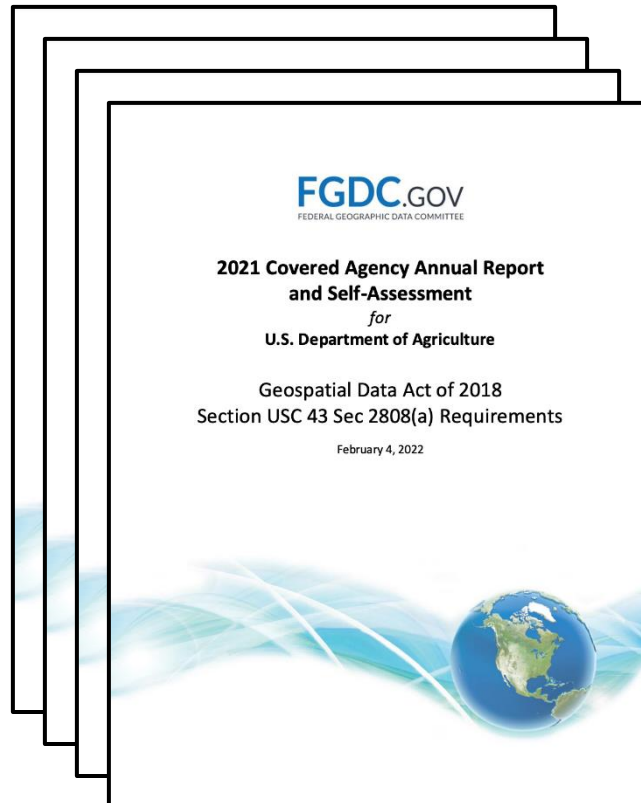
FGDC Responses to NGAC Comments on FY 2020 FGDC Summary of GDA Annual Reports v3

Name / Org.	Report Section	Improvement or Recommendation	Type of Change/Suggestion	Page / Section	Comment	Resolution
NGAC	3.1	Areas Needing Improvement	Self Assessment Approach	Overall	Better understanding of the 3-level reporting assessment process. Without knowing how each agency conducted their self-assessment, it seems like there could be variable differences in the way each agency interprets the criteria for meeting, making progress or failing to meet expectations. See examples in cell comment.	FGDC and agencies collaborated to develop a suite of questions and a key to self-assessment based on the responses made by the agency. Agencies are required to maintain the artifacts for their self assessments in order to provide additional detail about agency self assessment processes. FGDC anticipates that the 2022 GDA audits will provide additional analysis and recommendations on FGDC self assessment approach.
NGAC	3.2	Areas Needing Improvement	Table Formatting/ Consistency	Table 1	Some covered agencies have null values for being theme leads and/or dataset managers. This role and the impact on the reporting status should be noted in the agency report and the FGDC summary.	A notation indicating this will be included in the future. However, it does not impact the reporting because Covered Agencies report on all geospatial data, while Lead Covered Agencies reports cover all NGDA datasets.
NGAC	3.2	Areas Needing Improvement	Table Formatting/ Consistency	Table 2 & 3	While Tables 2 and 3 stand alone, it seems that one would have an impact on the other (Table 2 deals with requirements while Table 3 deals with data themes). The requirements table (Table 2) indicates that many agencies are meeting expectations, while the data theme table (Table 3) indicates that most agencies are simply making progress.	The requirements for CA and LCAs are different. GDA Section 2508 establishes 13 covered agency requirements and separate lead covered agency requirements are established in Section 2505. While there is some overlap, covered agency requirements cover all geospatial data and the lead covered requirements apply specifically to the NGDA datasets. Therefore, the reporting results may be different.
NGAC	3.2	Areas Needing Improvement	Table Formatting/ Consistency	Overall	At the time of this reporting, the IG audits and agency self-evaluation reports were conducted using two different evaluation approaches and criteria. The NGAC notes that the agency reports and agency IG audits used differing criteria. It is recommended that in future, agencies provide their GDA reporting information to their IG offices.	This is an excellent suggestion. FGDC staff has met regularly with representatives from the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE) to provide information about the GDA reporting process and to encourage consistent approaches across agencies to the audit process. When the IG offices conducted their initial 2020 audits, the FGDC reporting templates and criteria were not yet completed. FGDC will provide copies of the approved 2020 reports and the 2021 templates used for CA and LCA reporting to the CIGIE and suggest that agencies can also provide this information to their agency's independent IG office. However, agency IG offices are independent and will conduct their audits as they see fit.
NGAC	3.2	Areas Needing Improvement	Table Formatting/ Consistency	Overall	The published NGDA Portfolio itemizes 176 datasets, yet the agencies reported on only 169 datasets. It would appear that the FGDC is only reporting on "approved" datasets. If so, this should be noted in the summary report.	Agreed.
NGAC	3.2	Areas Needing Improvement	Table Formatting/ Consistency	Overall	An overall score for each of the 13 requirements should be included in the summary.	Based on the initial reports all agencies would be making progress and none of the agencies would "Meet expectations." FGDC believes this would be an oversimplified and potentially misleading representation of the reporting status related to a complex set of GDA requirements. For this reason the Dashboards were developed to allow stakeholders to access all agency input.
NGAC	3.2	Areas Needing Improvement	Table Formatting/ Consistency	Overall	The definitions of the rating criteria should be further clarified so as to reduce or eliminate interpretations of their intended meaning.	FGDC will seek to continually improve the clarity of the criteria used in the reporting process. Note that additional information about how the ratings are derived can be found in the suite of questions for each requirement used in the reporting templates.

# 2021 GDA Summary Report

Includes links to:

## 16 Covered Agency Annual Reports



## 18 NGDA Data Theme Annual Reports





# 2021 GDA Summary Report

Includes:

## Summary of Covered Agency Evaluations

FY2021 GDA 43 U.S.C. 2808 (a)(1)–(13) Covered Agency																
Requirement	USDA	DOC	ED	DOE	HHS	DHS	HUD	DOI	DOJ	DOL	DOS	DOT	TREAS	VA	GSA	NASA
(1) Covered agency geospatial strategies	P-	M*	M	M	P	M*	P	M	M	P	M*	F-	M*	P-	M*	M*
(2) Support data sharing	P	M	M	P	P-	M*	M	P	M	P	M*	M*	M	M	M	P
(3) Promote data integration	P	M	M	P	M	P	M	M	M	M*	M	M	M	M*	M	M
(4) Ensure records retention schedule for geospatial data	P	M	M*	P	P-	P	F	M*	M	M	M	P	M	P	M	P
(5) Allocate resources for geospatial data management responsibilities	P	M	P	P	P	P	P	M*	M	P	P	M	M	M	M*	M
(6) Use data standards	P	P	P	P	P	M*	P	M*	P	P	M*	P	P	P	M*	M
(7) Support coordination and partnerships	P	M	M	P	P-	P	M	M*	M	P	P	M	M	M	M*	M*
(8) Promote application of geospatial data assets	P	M	M	P	P	M*	M	M*	M	P	M*	M*	M*	M	M	P
(9) Protection of privacy and confidentiality	P	M	M	M	M	M*	M	M*	M	M	M*	M*	M	M	M	M
(10) Declassified data	M	M	M	F	M	F	M	M	M*	M	M*	M	M	M	M	M
(11) Non-duplication of data	P	M	M	P	P-	P	M	M*	M*	M	P	M*	M	M	M	M
(12) Ensuring high-quality data	P	M	M	P-	M	M*	M	M	M	M	P	M	M	M*	M	M
(13) Point of contact	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M

\* Denotes an increase in rating from FY 2020 GDA annual report. - Denotes a decrease in rating from FY 2020 annual report.  
Table data as of September 30, 2021

**16 Covered Agencies reporting on 13 GDA requirements**

## Summary of NGDA Data Theme Evaluations

Theme and Number of NGDA Datasets (174 total)	GDA 43 U.S.C. § 2805 (b)(3) (A) - (D) Requirements			
	(A) Geospatial data standards	(B) Nationwide population of the data theme	(C) Establish actions that support the goals and objectives in the NSDI strategic plan	(D) Addressing user needs
Address (1)	P	P	P	P
Biodiversity and Ecosystems (8)	P	P	P	P
Cadastral (19)	P	P	P	P
Climate and Weather (4)	P	P	P	P
Cultural Resources (2)	P	P	P	P*
Elevation (12)	P	P	P	P
Geodetic Control (4)	P	P	P	P
Geology (6)	P	P	P	P
Administrative and Statistical Boundaries (37)	P	P	P	P
Imagery (10)	P	M*	P	M*
International Boundaries (1)	M	P	M	M*
Land Use – Land Cover (13)	P-	P-	P	P
Real Property (14)	P	P	P	P
Soils (5)	P	P	P	P
Transportation (15)	P	P	P-	P-
Utilities (2)	P	P	P	P
Water – Inland (5)	P	P	P	P
Water – Oceans & Coasts (16)	P	P	P	P

\* Denotes an increase in rating from FY 2020 GDA annual report. - Denotes a decrease in rating from FY 2020 annual report.  
Table data as of September 30, 2021.

**18 NGDA Data Themes (including 174 underlying NGDA datasets) reporting on 4 multi-part GDA requirements**

# 2021 GDA Summary Report

Includes links to Covered Agency & Lead Covered Agency Dashboards:

FY2021 - GDA Covered Agency Reporting Dashboard		
<b>Select an Agency</b>	<b>Selected Agency:</b> U.S. Department of Agriculture <small>Last Update: January 14, 2022</small>	
<a href="#">Department of Homeland Security</a>	<b>USC 43 Sec 2808(a)(1) Covered Agency Geospatial Strategies</b>	
<a href="#">Department of Commerce</a>	<b>GDA Requirement:</b> Prepare, maintain, publish, and implement a strategy for advancing geographic information and related geospatial data and activities appropriate to the mission of the covered agency, in support of the strategic plan for the National Spatial Data Infrastructure.	
<a href="#">Department of Energy</a>	<b>Self-Assessment:</b>	<b>Made Progress Toward Expectations</b> <b>KEY</b> Meets expectations = Yes to Question 1.1 and 1.2 Made progress toward expectations = Yes to Question 1.1 and No to Question 1.2 Fails to meet expectations = No to Questions 1.1 and 1.2
<a href="#">Department of the Interior</a>	<b>Clarifying Text:</b> FGDC developed and released a new national strategic plan for the development of the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) [the GDA, USC 43 Sec 2804(c)], which was approved by the FGDC Steering Committee in November 2020. Covered Agency Geospatial Strategies [the GDA, USC 43 Sec 2808(a)(1)], which will support the goals in the NSDI strategic plan, were due to be completed and submitted for agency approval by February 26, 2021, per FGDC guidance. For more information, please visit <a href="http://fgdc.gov/nsdi-plan">http://fgdc.gov/nsdi-plan</a> .	
<a href="#">Department of Justice</a>	<b>1.1 Is your strategy complete, approved and being implemented?</b> Yes	
<a href="#">Department of Labor</a>	<b>1.2 Is your strategy published? If yes, a textbox will be provided.</b> Yes	
<a href="#">Department of State</a>	<b>Please provide the URL or briefly describe how public access is being provided.</b> USDA's Geospatial Strategic Plan is published/available to the public on USDA OCIO web pages. URL: <a href="https://www.usda.gov/ocio/enterprise-geospatial-strategic-plan">https://www.usda.gov/ocio/enterprise-geospatial-strategic-plan</a> . The PDF is: <a href="https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2021-12/Enterprise%20Geospatial%20Strategic%20Plan_Final.pdf">https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2021-12/Enterprise%20Geospatial%20Strategic%20Plan_Final.pdf</a> . This link: <a href="https://www.usda.gov/ocio/centers/egmo">https://www.usda.gov/ocio/centers/egmo</a> also gives an outline of the Geospatial mission and strategic goals. Public access is available via search on USDA OCIO enterprise web pages and via Google.	
<a href="#">Department of Transportation</a>	<b>1.3 Brief Summary (Limit 2000 characters, or approximately 300 words): Please provide a brief description of agency actions and accomplishments in FY2021 in addressing USC 43 Sec 2808(a)(1). "Prepare and implement a strategy for advancing geospatial data activities appropriate to the agency's mission." If the assessment is "made progress toward expectations," include the actions your agency is taking to achieve the "meets expectations" level.</b> The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) published its Enterprise Geospatial Strategic Plan (GSP) in FY21 and currently aligns w/it to advance geographic information, related geospatial data & activities in support of the National Spatial Data Infrastructure. USDA's GSP elaborates upon each of the goals w/specific objectives, including expanding use of geospatial data/access, promotes adoption of policies/standardized software, securing funding/staff for geospatial initiatives, and otherwise developing partnerships, encouraging geospatial	

FY2021 - GDA Lead Covered Agency Reporting Dashboard		
<b>Select a Theme</b>	<b>Selected Theme:</b> Address <small>Last Update: January 21, 2022</small>	
<b>Address</b>	<b>Geospatial Data Standards - USC 43 Sec 2805(b)(3)(A)</b>	
<a href="#">Biodiversity and Ecosystems</a>	<b>GDA Requirement:</b>	Provide leadership and facilitate the development and implementation of geospatial data standards for the National Geospatial Data Asset data theme, with a particular emphasis on a data content standard for the National Geospatial Data Asset data theme, including by- i. assessing existing standards; ii. identifying anticipated or needed data standards; and iii. developing a plan to originate and implement needed standards with relevant community and international practices- l. in accordance with Office of Management and Budget Circular A- 119, or any successor thereto; and ll. consistent with or as a part of the plan described in subparagraph (B);
<a href="#">Cadastre</a>	<b>Self-Assessment:</b>	<b>Made Progress Toward Expectations</b> <b>Key:</b> FGDC agencies continue work to evaluate options for establishing a common understanding and approach to meeting GDA requirements. The FGDC Steering Committee has the Briefing Paper - Reestablishing the FGDC Standards Process 8-4-21 under consideration. The paper outlines a path forward for reestablishing a resourced and sustainable standards process that will be compliant with the GDA and responsibilities for managing standards. This work provides a foundation for designating "Made progress toward expectations" for all themes the FY2021 reporting year. <b>Response options included:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fails to Meet Expectations</li><li>• Made Progress Toward Expectations</li><li>• Meets Expectations</li></ul>
<a href="#">Climate and Weather</a>	<b>QA.1. Are there activities ongoing that your agency would like to highlight regarding development, modification, or establishment of standards for any of the data within the Theme?</b> Yes	
<a href="#">Cultural Resources</a>	<b>Please identify the NGDA datasets for which you would like to provide information on activities to support standards.</b> 196   National Address Database (NAD)	
<a href="#">Elevation</a>	<b>Please provide a brief description of work you would like to highlight that supports standards, including citations and resource links as necessary (Limit 5,000 characters, approximately 800 words)</b> The Address Theme established the FGDC Address Standard Maintenance Subgroup in June 2021, tasked with reviewing and suggesting modifications to the existing FGDC Address Standard and meeting monthly. This subgroup includes a broad set of stakeholders in the federal, state, territories and local government communities, and stakeholder organizations such as the National States Geographic Information Council (NSGIC) and the Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (URISA). The Address Theme established the Address Content Subgroup in February 2018, consisting of federal, state and professional organization partners, including NSGIC and URISA. This subgroup worked over several years to develop a new standard to meet agency-specific and stakeholder needs for the NAD, proposed NGDA data set, culminating in the NAD Content Proposal (June 2020) and Draft NAD Content Requirements in September 2021, currently pending Co-chair review and formal subcommittee acceptance. The Census Bureau and Department of Transportation lead efforts in FY21 to define NAD Content Requirements, through the subject matter expertise of the members of the NAD Content Subgroup who provided a proposal, followed by presentation, debate,	
<a href="#">Geodetic Control</a>		
<a href="#">Geology</a>		
<a href="#">Governmental Units, and Administrative and Statistical Boundaries</a>		
<a href="#">Imagery</a>		
<a href="#">International Boundaries</a>		
<a href="#">Land Use - Land Cover</a>		
<a href="#">Real Property</a>		
<a href="#">Soils</a>		
<a href="#">Transportation</a>		
<a href="#">Utilities</a>		
<a href="#">Water - Inland</a>		
<a href="#">Water - Oceans &amp; Coasts</a>		

# 2022 GDA Audits

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- Covered Agency Inspectors General are conducting biennial audits of agency compliance with GDA requirements
- FGDC staff has coordinated with Inspectors General council (CIGIE) to provide information on GDA reporting approach
- Key points:
  - CIGIE has indicated that standards will be a focus area for the 2022 audits
  - Each agency IG has discretion in determining focus of audit
  - Target date for completion of audits is October 2022



# 2021 GDA Report - NGAC Comments

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## Focus areas for NGAC comments on 2021 GDA Report Summary:

### 1. Positive elements

- What was successful in the initial GDA report summary?

### 2. Areas needing improvement

- What areas need improvement?

### 3. Recommendations for future reports

- What can FGDC do to improve future versions of the GDA annual report summaries?

NGAC members provided high-level comments, under the 3 focus areas above, to the GDA Reporting Subcommittee

# NGAC Review & Comment

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## Positive Elements

- **Changes to GDA Reporting**
  - It is helpful to have a new section discussing the changes to GDA reporting that also discusses the comments provided by the NGAC.
- **Summary of Results**
  - Table 1 provides a good summary of agencies and their NGDA responsibilities.
  - It is helpful that the dashboard indicated whether the self-assessment in the current year is higher or lower than the previous year.
  - The summary mode of the dashboard was very helpful.
- **Self-Assessment Explanation Character Limits**
  - Agencies had the ability to provide more detailed responses given higher character limits for explanations to provide additional insights and details, which was a significant improvement from last year.

# NGAC Review & Comment

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## **Areas Needing Improvement**

- **Focus on Results, Rather than Process**

- Future reports should begin with an Executive Summary, rather than a description of the reporting process.
- Sections 1.1 through 1.4 should be an appendix to the report, rather than part of the report itself.

- **Greater Clarity and Documentation for Self-Assessment Approaches**

- More work should be put into determining and describing how to assess progress toward “Making Progress”. It would be helpful to understand the tangible measures that lead to this rating.
- The results in Table 2 and Table 3 should be expanded upon by descriptive or summary information discussing progress. The report should include highlights of achievements, progress toward goals, and deficiencies reported out by agencies with related explanations.

# NGAC Review & Comment

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## **Areas Needing Improvement**

- **Reporting Agencies**

- Additional agencies with geospatial responsibilities, such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), should be included in the reporting requirements as both a Covered Agency and Lead Covered Agency.

# NGAC Review & Comment

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## Recommendations for Future Reports

- **Greater Explanation for Rating Changes and Progress Made**
  - More information needs to be shared regarding efforts that failed in the last report and continue to fail in this report. If possible, a cause should be identified.
  - When a minus is indicated on the dashboard, an explanation should be included if the dataset went from Meets Expectations to Progress Made.
  - Add key challenges for the Covered Agencies whose reporting fails to meet expectations for specific requirements as shown in Table 2. By doing this, this report section could be used to identify areas where agencies need some level of assistance to meet expectations.
  - Key successes resulting from the GDA should be added. For example: "Agency X has been able to make dataset Y available to the public, which has been downloaded Z times in the past year."
  - It should be made clear in the report whether agencies made further progress toward achieving GDA goals.
  - More information should be shared about any identified specific efforts that more than meet expectations.

# NGAC Review & Comment

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## Recommendations for Future Reports

- **Ordering Tables by Responsibility**
  - Table 1 and Table 2 should be ordered by level of responsibility, rather than alphabetical by agency. Organization by level of responsibility could be done by organizing the table by the totals of theme leads and number of datasets they are responsible for in descending order.
- **Common Survey Instrument**
  - We suggest exploring the use of other technologies that may be more applicable to this specific use case in lieu of Survey123.
- **NGAC Commenting Process**
  - NGAC members should read the individual agency reports, which provide helpful context. The summary reports alone do not give enough context to allow sufficient insight, especially on elements on which an agency reports that it is making progress.



# GDA Reporting – Next Steps

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## NGAC:

- **Action: NGAC approval of NGAC comments on 2021 GDA Report Summary**
- **Action:** In 2022, the subcommittee will review and provide comments on the individual covered agency and National Geospatial Data Asset (NGDA) Data Theme annual reports

## FGDC:

- Review and address NGAC comments on 2021 report
- Develop plan & timeline for FY 2022 reports and biennial GDA Report to Congress
- Coordinate with IG offices on 2022 audits